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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

World Press Freedom Day

The United States is proud to join the international community in celebrating World Press Freedom Day and the contributions that journalists make to advancing human dignity, liberty, and prosperity.

We live in a world where the free flow of information and ideas is a powerful force for progress. Independent print, broadcast, and online media outlets are more than sources of news and opinion. They also expose abuses of power, fight corruption, challenge assumptions, and provide constructive outlets for new ideas and dissent.

Freedom of the press is protected by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a hallmark of every free society. Wherever media freedom is in jeopardy, all other human rights are also under threat. A free media is essential to democracy and it fosters transparency and accountability, both of which are prerequisites for sustained economic development.

Those who seek to abuse power and spread corruption view media freedom as a threat. Instead of supporting an open press, they attempt to control or silence independent voices. The methods they use against news organizations and journalists range from restrictive laws and regulations to censorship, violence, imprisonment, and even murder. Such tactics are not new, and cannot go unanswered.

We are especially concerned about the citizens from our own country currently under detention abroad: individuals such as Roxana Saberi in Iran, and Euna Lee and Laura Ling in North Korea.

On behalf of President Obama, I want to affirm the United States' strong commitment to media freedom worldwide. We will champion this cause through our diplomatic efforts and through our exchange and assistance programs. We will work in partnership with non-governmental organizations and directly with members of the media. And we will stand with those courageous men and women who face persecution for exercising and defending the right of media freedom.

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